Rising Waters: Global Warming and the Fate of the Pacific Islands. 57 minutes, VHS, color, 2000. Director: Andrea Torrice. Producer: Andrea Torrice in association with the Independent Television Service and Pacific Islanders in Communications. Distributor: Bullfrog Films. US$250.

In an introductory clip a Marshall Islander comments, "It is very difficult for someone living in the United States to grasp the fact that if the sea level rises just a few feet our whole nation will disappear." This comment, and the timing of the video's release, leave little room for doubt why the video was produced and who is the principal target audience—the American public and, especially, its negotiators at the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change held in the Hague late last year.

However, despite this and many other efforts to raise public and political awareness in advance of that meeting, no accord was reached. The same incredulity and despondency the video depicts was generated following the negotiations the previous year in Bonn, in stark contrast to the optimism portrayed at the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio and the subsequent backslapping and hugging of the world leaders after agreeing in principal to the Kyoto Protocol. Vice President Gore's words at Kyoto were uncannily prophetic when he saw the challenge "to do what we promise, rather than promise what we cannot do." What will the United States promise, and when? The United States and a handful of other key countries are reluctant to promise even a 5.2 percent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2010. This is trifling in climate-change terms, given studies that show the target should be at least 60 percent.

Rising Waters makes other comparisons, invariably to great effect. One of the most poignant is the depiction of the United States as the country that forced Marshall Islanders to abandon their home islands to allow nuclear testing, the country that emits the most greenhouse gases, and the country that is preventing the Kyoto Protocol from coming into force. Another is the contrast between the values of residents of Manhattan and those of Samoans—importantly, both live on islands, but while one cherishes their traditional heritage and ties to the ocean, the other looks landward and is preoccupied with economic growth. Their common ground is that both will suffer serious consequences from rising sea level and increased storminess—demonstrated convincingly through images of a flooded New York subway from a storm in 1992 and of Sāmoa devastated by a hurricane a year earlier. The contrast is in the ability to replace what is lost and to cope with the future—raising the sea walls is portrayed as a viable option for Manhattan, but forced retreat and eventual migration may be the future for many Pacific Islanders.

The video takes a more mature

approach than many of its predecessors—for example, and atypically, it acknowledges that "development" should share the blame for problems so often attributed solely to climate variability and change. According to a local official, Majuro has lost "dozens of feet of shoreline . . . unregulated development contributed to the damage, but unusual storms and sweeping high tides are thought to be the main cause of the erosion." Few viewers will take comfort from the images of garbage imported from the United States, or coral dug from the lagoon being used for coastal protection—that "constantly needs replacing"—or from officials claiming that building and maintaining sea walls around Majuro will cost more than the annual budget for the Marshall Islands.

The video is correct in depicting many of the island problems as consistent with the impacts of climate change—a conclusion in keeping with that in the recently released *Third Assessment Report* of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. However, credibility is stretched at times, more through implication than explicit attribution—an example being the loss of the culturally important Bikeman Island in Kiribati, most likely due to changed lagoonal circulation resulting from causeway construction. The power of the example is in its use as an analogue for the future, and in that sense the point is well made through imagery, sound clips, and commentary.

Rising Waters is a highly professional production—its 57 minutes pass quickly, making good use of historic film and video files, case studies based on Sāmoa, Kiribati, and the Marshall Islands, historic and geographic comparisons, and visually appealing aboveground and underwater images of the Pacific. Stereotypes and clichés are, by and large, avoided. The video is notable for its use of Pacific Islanders to tell their stories and advocate solutions. Only two non–Pacific Island experts are featured, presumably to give credibility to the target US audience. Despite this good reason, their participation detracts. The same applies to the use of nonmetric units. It is a pity that one US expert was used to raise the specter of sea level rising 15 to 25 feet (5 to 8 meters) due to melting of the polar ice caps. This is a future too distant for Pacific Islanders.

The issue is more immediate and urgent—for example, "something is definitely happening" in reference to an apparent increase in tropical cyclone frequency; "as the world changes around us, we also feel these changes" in reference to changed weather patterns over the past forty years. The issue is also more serious than the response of the Greening Earth Society would indicate. They see greenhouse gas emissions resulting in a "better world, a more productive world" due to increased levels of photosynthesis from higher carbon dioxide levels—a "marginal and very dangerous view that gives an excuse for not planning effectively for the future" was the blunt response of one Pacific Island expert.

The video rightly makes much of the cultural heritage that is under threat, especially its long and unique history, and its present vulnerability—"we will

lose human values even before we start losing the islands"—brings home the threat and its immediacy. In its entirety the work provides a compelling case why global warming should be taken seriously and concerted efforts made to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. President Clinton is shown acknowledging that global warming "is no longer a theory, but it is a fact that global warming is for real." Recent statements by President Bush suggest he concurs. International agreement on action is now focused on two issues—seeking a commitment by large developing countries to reduce their emissions, and achieving a transition to a low carbon economy while avoiding unacceptable impacts on national and global economies.

In my own work, the video has helped Pacific Islanders, and others, gain a sense of urgency about reducing greenhouse gas emissions. There is a need to ensure that the negotiators in the Bush administration are also cognizant of the points made so convincingly in *Rising Waters*. Two clips from the video say it all—"If the bell tolls for them, it will toll for us too"; "Whether you are part of the problem, or part of the solution, your turn will come."

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Chea's Great Kuarao, 57 minutes, VHS (PAL and NTSC), color, 2000. Filmmakers: Edvard Hviding, Rolf Scott, Trygve Tollefsen. Bergen: SOT Film AS, Boks 4221, 5837 Bergen, Norway; <http://www.sotfilm.no>. Coproducer: University of Bergen, Norway. Further information: Edvard Hviding, email: edvard.hviding@sosantr.uib.no; tel: 47 55 58 92 64.

Chea's Great Kuarao describes a culturally important community fishing practice in Marovo Lagoon, Western Province, Solomon Islands, and embeds it in the larger context of the interaction between increasing commercialization and customary marine tenure. Marovo Lagoon has been under consideration for listing as a UNESCO World Heritage Site and is an area of environmental contention.

The film opens by stating the general theme that Marovo cultural traditions are adaptable to the contemporary world then moves to scenes of Chea village. These Seventh-Day Adventist villagers, like others in Marovo, are said to have been transformed by colonialism from widely feared headhunters to lively Christians, and they continue to assert customary land and sea rights. Sabbath-day scenes, including selections from a church sermon and singing, are followed by a community announcement about a great *kuarao* (community fish drive) to be held on the coming Tuesday.

Various speakers, including the master fisherman discuss the significance of the *kuarao* and the role of the chief and his brothers in organizing the community's "big fishing tech-